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Cast of Characters

THE COLONEL, Elvis' manager. A big man with charm and cunning.

TRUDY, the Colonel's capable German secretary.

ROSCOE, a nerdish office worker.

CANDY, a friend of the Colonel's.

JILL TANNER, an ace newspaper reporter.

Time

A few days before Christmas 1970.

Setting

The office of Elvis' manager, The Colonel.

The action of the play takes place entirely in The Colonel's office in Memphis, Tennessee.

Casting Note

None of the "Elvises" in this show need to be able to sing or look like Elvis. In fact the less they're able to sing or look like Elvis the funnier it is!

Acknowledgments

Elvis Has Left The Building was first produced by Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia, Richard Rose—Producing Artistic Director, on May 13th, 2011 with the following cast and crew:

THE COLONEL	Eugene Wolf
TRUDY	Mary Lucy Bivins
ROSCOE	Bryan Pridgen
CANDY	Dan Folino
JILL TANNER	Hannah Ingram
Director	Nicholas Piper
Set Designer	Dale F. Jordan
Costume Designer	Kelly Jenkins
Lighting Designer	Andrew Morehouse
Sound Designer	Bobby Beck
Wig & Makeup Designer	Ryan Fischer
Stage Manager	Seymour

ELVIS HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

by V. Cate and Duke Ernsberger

ACT I

(In the darkness we hear the opening strains of Richard Wagner's "Also Sprach Zarathustra" the now famous 2001: A Space Odyssey theme. The fanfare builds in its familiar fashion as the backdrop of the stage is instantly hit with light like a blazing sunrise. In the center of the light is the silhouette of Elvis already locked in one of his famous poses. Even though it is a figure of black there is no mistaking it. The broad shoulders, the famous pompadour, the one piece jumpsuit with the collar turned up, holding a microphone in one hand and the audience in the other. As the music reaches its climax the silhouette shifts from one famous pose to another until it finally switches to his most famous stance with outstretched cape and bowed head. The music fades.)

The stage is plunged into darkness again. We hear an announcer's voice trying to speak above the cheering crowd.)

VOICE. Ladies and gentlemen...Elvis has left the building. Elvis has left the building.

(Lights immediately come up on the office of The Colonel. There is a door stage right and another door stage left. On the walls of the office are various posters from Elvois movies and pictures of the king standing next to the Colonel. There is a large desk up center strewn with newspapers, documents, movie scripts and a large intercom. Except for the swivel chair behind the desk there are no chairs in the room. That's intentional. The Colonel wants everyone to stand while he sits. A pair of Texas longhorns is mounted on the front of the desk. The Colonel's signature Stetson cowboy hat hangs on a nearby hat rack.)

THE COLONEL sits back in his swivel chair behind the desk. He is a large man in his sixties wearing a coat with a western style shirt and a string tie. He has a half smoked unlit cigar stuck in his mouth and a phone cradled in his neck. He is opening his mail while he talks. **THE COLONEL** is no hick. He is an astute business man, a genius at marketing and can turn on the charm when he chooses to. His single driving passion is to make money at the expense of others. The guiding symbol of his life is the dollar sign as long as it is someone else's dollar. He lives to control and manipulate people and in fact is an amateur hypnotist. He speaks without any

particular accent but manages to come off as a down-to-Earth good ole' boy.)

COLONEL. Let me refresh your memory. I'm still Elvis' manager. He's never had another manager but me and I'm the only manager he needs. Now you put Elvis on the line. Hell no I'm not gonna leave a message. I don't leave messages. People leave *me* messages. Wayne? I don't want to talk to Wayne. Why would I want to talk to that lyin' no good... Hello Wayne. No I called to talk to Elvis. Bobby? Why would I want to talk to Bobby? Bobby's nothin' but a low-down yellow-bellied... Hello Bobby. What do you mean who is this? Who do you think it is, Fidel Castro? This is the Colonel. Now you let me talk to the boy or I'll...hello? HELLO?

(He slams the phone down on its cradle as his secretary TRUDY enters with some papers. She is in her late 50s, efficient, intelligent, and speaks with a heavy Austrian accent sounding at times like Zsa Zsa Gabor.)

COLONEL. Hung up on me. Lyin' sons-a-... Am I gonna have to go through the Memphis Mafia every time I try to reach the boy?

TRUDY. *(Placing the papers in front of him:)* You shouldn't have to do that Colonel.

COLONEL. I know what they're tryin' to do.

TRUDY. *(Pointing on the paper where he should sign:)* Of course you do Colonel...sign here.

COLONEL. *(Signing his name on the paper:)* They're tryin' to keep the boy away from me.

TRUDY. *(Pointing to another place on another paper:)* It's just awful Colonel...and sign here.

COLONEL. *(Signing his name again:)* They're thinkin' it's probably time to get rid of the Colonel and handle things themselves.

TRUDY. *(Pointing to still another paper:)* Nobody can handle things like you Colonel...and here.

COLONEL. They can't con me. I'm the number one horseshit salesman around here.

TRUDY. Yes you are Colonel...*(They look at each other for a few beats.)*... and here.

(THE COLONEL signs his name for the last time. TRUDY grabs up the papers and pauses in the doorway.)

TRUDY. That man called again, Colonel.

COLONEL. Man? What man?

TRUDY. The man from the casino. "Bugs" Roselli.

COLONEL. Don't call him Bugs, he don't like to be called Bugs. Did he leave a message?

TRUDY. He said he doesn't leave messages. People leave him messages. *(She exits.)*

COLONEL. *(He looks worried for a moment and then flips on the intercom.)* Trudy?

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* Ya, Colonel.

COLONEL. Is Roscoe in there with you?

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* He's right here Colonel.

COLONEL. Roscoe?

INTERCOM. *(Roscoe.)* Ya Colonel?

COLONEL. Roscoe, listen to me very carefully...**WHISKERS!**

(We hear ROSCOE growl, bark. TRUDY screams.)

TRUDY. Oh no, not again!

(Suddenly we hear what sounds like a dog barking ferociously over the intercom. TRUDY screams.)

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* Get away from me. Get away. Stop. Stop it. Get down. **DOWN.**

(The barking continues, getting louder as TRUDY rushes back into the Colonel's office, bracing herself against the front of his desk.)

TRUDY. Colonel, how could you hypnotize that poor boy into believing he's a dog.

(TRUDY screams as the "dog" comes into the office. She runs behind the Colonel's chair as ROSCOE BARNES enters stage right on all fours, barking like a dog. ROSCOE is a young, naïve office boy with Buddy Holly glasses and square looking clothes. He jumps into the chair, almost tipping it over on TRUDY.)

TRUDY. Make him stop, Colonel. You've had your fun.

COLONEL. *(Laughing:)* Alright, alright. Heel Roscoe, ROSCOE... SIT. SIT ROSCOE.

(ROSCOE stops abruptly and sits, panting.)

TRUDY. Colonel you promised...no more hypnosis in the office.

COLONEL. (*Chuckling:*) I'm sorry Trude I couldn't resist. It's just too easy.

(*The "dog" barks again.*)

TRUDY. You bring him out of it this instant.

COLONEL. Aww come on, you gotta admit he makes more sense barkin' then he does talkin'.

(*ROSCOE tries to chase his tail.*)

TRUDY. Roscoe stop chasing your tail. You bring him out of it right now.

COLONEL. Ohh, all right. Ever since you Germans lost the Second World War you've been no fun at all. Roscoe? Listen to me Roscoe.

(*ROSCOE sits up at attention, his tongue jutting in and out of his mouth in rapid panting.*)

COLONEL. Listen to the sound of my voice. When I say the command word you will no longer be a dog..you will be yourself...Roscoe Barns... "*Whiskers.*"

ROSCOE. (*Back to normal:*) Mornin' Colonel...Miss Trudy. (*Looking about:*) How did I get here?

TRUDY. (*Rolling her eyes:*) Such childishness. Hypnotizing that sweet boy into believing he was a dog.

COLONEL. (*Chuckling:*) I'm just an amateur. You should see a real hypnotist in action.

TRUDY. You and your practical jokes. (*Heading for the door she gives ROSCOE a hopeless look.*) Get up off the floor Roscoe, you look ridiculous. (*She exits stage right, closing the door behind her.*)

(*ROSCOE gets up off the floor and dusts himself off. THE COLONEL chuckles.*)

COLONEL. (*Going through his mail:*) Did you pick up those flyers for Elvis' New Years Eve party?

ROSCOE. I picked up those flyers for Elvis' New Years Eve party.

COLONEL. You get the car washed?

ROSCOE. (*Looking through a small note pad:*) I got the car washed.

COLONEL. You get the donuts at the coffee shop?

ROSCOE. I got the donuts at the coffee shop.

COLONEL. Cream filled with the little colored sprinkles on top?

ROSCOE. Cream filled with the little colored sprinkles on top.

COLONEL. Stop repeating everything I say.

ROSCOE. Stop repeating everything you say?

COLONEL. You're still doing it.

ROSCOE. (*Genuinely perplexed:*) I'm still doing it?

COLONEL. (*Staring at ROSCOE for a few beats:*) You got a message for me from Sinatra?

ROSCOE. (*Looking through his note pad:*) I've got a message for you from Sinatra. (*THE COLONEL shakes his head, turns away and thumbs through his mail again while ROSCOE sits on the edge of the desk.*) I wrote it down so's I wouldn't forget...Mister Sinatra said...

COLONEL. (*His back to ROSCOE:*) You're sittin' on my desk.

ROSCOE. (*Hops off the desk wondering how THE COLONEL could know:*) Sorry...I mean...excuse me Colonel... (*Reading from his note pad:*) ...Mister Sinatra said..."Thank you for playing Santa Claus again at my Christmas party last week."

COLONEL. (*Looking through the mail and speaking without emotion:*) I love handin' out gifts to the little children. You told Frankie that didn't you?

ROSCOE. Yes I did... (*ROSCOE reads from the note pad again:*) I said..."The Colonel loves handin' out gifts to the little children."

COLONEL. Good.

ROSCOE. (*Still reading from the pad:*) Then he gave me a box of cigars to give to you. He said to give these cigars to The Snowman. He said they were from Havana.

COLONEL. Snowman? He called me The Snowman?

ROSCOE. Yes sir, he did. I wrote it down. (*Reading from the note pad:*) "You be sure to give these cigars to The Snowman...baby." He was callin' you the Snowman...I think the "baby" was meant for me. Why did he call you The Snowman, Colonel?

COLONEL. (*Beaming:*) Because nobody can pull off a "snow job" like me, Roscoe. A snow job is when somebody gets somebody else to do something they don't really want to do but they do it anyway. Frankie was paying me a compliment.

ROSCOE. Ohh...how come you sent me to see Mister Sinatra? Why didn't you just call him on the phone?

COLONEL. A man like Sinatra gets a hundred phone calls a day. I send him somebody in person and he feels important. It's important

for a man like Sinatra to feel important. You gotta know how to read people, Roscoe.

(THE COLONEL turns his swivel chair so his back is to ROSCOE and continues thumbing through a stack of mail.)

ROSCOE. *(Sitting on the edge of the desk again:)* Mister Sinatra said that I was lucky to be working for you because it was like I was working for Elvis.

COLONEL. You're sittin' on my desk. *(ROSCOE hops off the desk in amazement.)* You're a real fan of Elvis aren't you Roscoe.

ROSCOE. Yes sir Colonel. *(He stares up at one of Elvis' movie posters.)* I think Elvis is the greatest American in America. A poor boy who loved his mother and captured the hearts of a nation. I've got every record he ever recorded.

COLONEL. *(Looking over a memo:)* Is that a fact.

ROSCOE. Yes sir. I've seen every movie he ever made. Some of 'em three or four times. I can even do a pretty good impersonation of him. You want to hear it Colonel? *(THE COLONEL continues to read his memo.)* "Ahhhh...thank you very much." *(He laughs nervously.)* How was that Colonel?

COLONEL. *(Opening another letter:)* That was real nice Roscoe...now run along...I got a lot on my mind.

(The intercom beeps. THE COLONEL snaps it on.)

COLONEL. What is it Trudy? Is Elvis on the line?

TRUDY. No Colonel. It's Hal Michaels.

COLONEL. Put him on. *(To ROSCOE:)* Get those flyers into the mail.

ROSCOE. Get those flyers into the mail.

COLONEL. Put me an RC Cola in the ice box.

ROSCOE. *(Writing it in his memo pad:)* Put you an RC Cola in the ice box.

COLONEL. You're doing it again.

ROSCOE. I'm doing it again?

COLONEL. Get out. *(Grabbing up the telephone.)*

ROSCOE. *(Scribbling in his memo pad:)* Get out.

(ROSCOE rushes out the door stage right as TRUDY enters with coffee. THE COLONEL holds out his mug without looking at her as he speaks on the phone.)

COLONEL. Mornin' Hal. How's that new script for the next Elvis movie comin' along? Uh-huh.

(TRUDY fills his mug and quickly exits stage right.)

COLONEL. What's the plot? Uh-huh. Elvis plays a bouncer in a night club who dreams of bein' a singer and falls in love with the hat-check girl played by Ann-Margret. What're you gonna call it? Honky-Tonk Blues...hm. Why don't we shake it up Hal, go in a new direction. Why don't we make him a ski instructor out in Colorado who dreams of bein' a singer and falls in love with the waitress at the lodge played by Ann-Margret. We'll call it Aspen Mountain Blues. Not enough action, huh. Okay, here's another one, totally different idea. How 'bout we make him a trapeze artist in the circus who dreams of being a singer and falls in love with the gal who runs the shootin' gallery played by Ann-Margret? We'll call it...Big Tent Blues. I agree. It's a whole new approach.

(TRUDY enters with some papers which she places on the desk. She then takes out a pair of scissors, removes the cigar from THE COLONEL's mouth, clips the soggy end off the cigar while holding it over the waste basket and returns the cigar to THE COLONEL's mouth. THE COLONEL doesn't seem to notice her. She starts to exit when he covers the phone and speaks to her.)

COLONEL. Trudy, what about that call to Candy?

TRUDY. He's on his way, Colonel.

COLONEL. Send him straight in as soon as he gets here.

TRUDY. Ya Colonel.

COLONEL. I need to laugh, Trudy.

TRUDY. *(Pausing at the door, she knows what's coming:)* Ya Colonel.

COLONEL. Say something in German.

TRUDY. "Hans, good en todd, Americanski come as ze here, schnell."

COLONEL. *(Laughs a nasty laugh:)* I love it when you talk German.

TRUDY. "Gott im Himmel."

(She wearily shakes her head and exits.)

COLONEL. *(Back into the phone:)* What's that? Oh you know me, Hal. You can make a movie about him datin' a kangaroo so long as we get the five hundred thousand up front and forty per cent of the gross. Course it's gonna cost you an additional five percent because I've got to talk him into it. Oh, he says he doesn't want to make my kind of pictures any more. Says he wants to make serious movies, movies

about real people with real problems, you know...the kinda' movies that don't make money. I'll have a talk with him and get back to you after the holidays. Send me a copy of the script for my approval.

(Hanging up the phone he hits the intercom.)

COLONEL. Trudy?

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* Ya Colonel.

COLONEL. Call Graceland again and get Elvis on the phone.

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* Colonel you've been calling them all morning.

COLONEL. And I'm gonna keep callin' till I get Elvis on the phone. Time's running out.

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* Ya Colonel. Candy just walked in.

COLONEL. Well tell him to keep on walkin'...into my office.

(He dabs at his face with the handkerchief as CANDY rushes in. He is a good looking man in his early 40s, wearing a modest sports coat, an open collared shirt and dark bell bottomed pants.)

CANDY. *(Racing into the room:)* What's going on? What's all the excitement about?

COLONEL. Where you been?

CANDY. In bed, till I got a call from Trudy.

COLONEL. I thought I told you to stay close.

CANDY. I'm here aren't I, how close do you want me?

COLONEL. I want you in my desk drawer like a bottle of bourbon. When's the last time you talked to Elvis?

CANDY. You dragged me out of a warm bed to ask me when's the last time I talked to Elvis?

COLONEL. It's a simple question.

CANDY. It's simple alright, I could've answered it over the phone.

COLONEL. I need you here in the flesh. You're the closest thing I've got to a friend. I got trouble. I need to find Elvis.

CANDY. I haven't seen Elvis in a couple of weeks. *(Looking around irritably:)* When are you gonna get some chairs for this office?

COLONEL. *(Sitting in his chair behind the desk)* Chairs? The only chair I need is the one I'm sittin' in. I like folks standin' up when I talk to 'em. If people sit down they get comfortable and comfortable people are dangerous. Comfortable people get settled in, they get snug,

they get chummy. Next thing you know they're wantin' to use your bathroom. You haven't seen the boy for a couple of weeks, huh?

CANDY. No sir.

COLONEL. Damn it. I gotta talk to him and I gotta talk to him now.

CANDY. Why don't you just call him?

COLONEL. I can't get through to him he's surrounded himself with a bunch of stoned-out body guards.

CANDY. The Memphis Mafia?

COLONEL. (*With disdain:*) Memphis Mafia. That's too good a name for 'em. Makes it sound like they're some secret organization instead of a bunch of pot smokin' gigolos which is what they are.

CANDY. Oh, they're alright. They just like to party 24 hours a day is all.

COLONEL. They make it real hard for me to reach him when I need to reach him and I need to reach him.

CANDY. The Memphis Mafia is very protective of their king.

COLONEL. They're a bunch a hanger-ons, yes-men, glad-handers. Old buddies lookin' for hand-outs.

CANDY. Elvis wouldn't put up with them if he didn't need them.

COLONEL. He don't need them as bad as he needs me. I work twenty-four hours a day for the boy. I get him top dollar, I squeeze the studios for every dime I can get. I make 'em pay for the privilege of usin' Elvis.

CANDY. For which you pocket 50% of the profits.

(*THE COLONEL steps down stage left.*)

COLONEL. Sometimes I wish I was back in the carnival business.

CANDY. Hosing down elephants?

COLONEL. Don't get smart. I miss them elephants. I miss the hustle and the grift. I miss wakin' up every day in a new town with people waitin' for you to take their money and glad to give it to you. You could pick their pockets and they'd smile at you while you did it. (*Pause.*) He doesn't call me anymore.

CANDY. He doesn't call anybody anymore.

COLONEL. He doesn't stop by to see me anymore.

CANDY. He never dropped by to see you.

COLONEL. I made him the most famous singer of all time.

CANDY. And now you've got him singing songs like "Rock-A-Hula Baby."

COLONEL. "Rock-A-Hula Baby" made money. "Do The Clam" made money too. It's a popular dance now.

CANDY. "Do The Clam"... He's the King of Rock and Roll. He should be doing a world tour, performing in London and Paris. He should be doing television, some serious movies. He's not a half bad actor with the right script.

COLONEL. What's wrong with the movies he's makin'?

CANDY. Oh come on Colonel, at the end of his last movie you had him singing "Old Macdonald's Farm" on the back of a chicken truck.

COLONEL. People like that down-home touch.

CANDY. Loosen your reins on him. You keep him shut away from people. You won't even let him do interviews.

COLONEL. Interviews? Hell, you don't make money off of interviews. Besides if people see too much of him on T.V. he'll lose his mystique.

CANDY. He's changed, Colonel.

COLONEL. I don't know what you're talking about.

CANDY. Come on Pops, it's been going on since his mother died. You know all about the guns.

COLONEL. So he likes guns. That's just the kid in him.

CANDY. You saw him at that wedding last month.

COLONEL. He was best man, he was a little nervous.

CANDY. He was packin' heat.

COLONEL. Every American has the right to bear arms.

CANDY. It wasn't a shotgun wedding, Colonel. He was carrying two forty five automatics.

COLONEL. You just leave the guns to me, Candy. *(He turns his chair away from CANDY.)*

CANDY. *(Sitting on the desk:)* Fine...you want me leave the drugs with you too?

COLONEL. *(His back to CANDY:)* Drugs?

CANDY. You know all about the drugs.

COLONEL. *(His back still to CANDY:)* You're sittin' on my desk.

CANDY. *(Hops off the desk:)* Elvis wants to be a narc.

COLONEL. (*Spinning around in his chair:*) He wants to be a what?

CANDY. He wants a Federal Narcotic Officer's badge to wear.

COLONEL. (*Stunned:*) Why?

CANDY. He says that way he won't be paranoid carrying around his drugs and his guns.

COLONEL. Wait a minute, wait a minute. Let me get this straight. You're sayin' that Elvis...my boy...the most famous entertainer on Earth...who's just been nominated for the Top Ten Most Outstanding Young Men in America...is tryin' to get hold of a federal badge so he can drive around in his car with a loaded gun and a glove compartment full of drugs?

CANDY. Rock 'n' roll, baby.

COLONEL. Now where in the world does he think he's gonna get a Federal Narcotics Badge? (*Hitting the intercom:*) Trudy?

INTERCOM. (*Trudy.*) Ya Colonel.

COLONEL. Call over to Bud's Trophy Shop.

INTERCOM. (*Trudy.*) You mean the shop that makes the illegal Free Parking signs we use?

COLONEL. That's the one. Tell Bud to whip up a Federal Narcotic Officer's badge for Elvis, silver leaf, Eagle Wings, E Pluribus Unum the works. Make it pronto.

INTERCOM. (*Trudy.*) Right away, Colonel.

CANDY. I don't believe I'm standing here listening to this.

COLONEL. (*Smiling:*) That takes care of that.

CANDY. That doesn't take care of anything. The last thing he needs is a phony police badge, Colonel. He needs professional help.

COLONEL. He's got professional help. He's got a doctor.

CANDY. Oh wise up, Colonel. You don't think he's got that doctor traveling with him just to give him cod liver oil in the mornin', do you?

COLONEL. That doctor is a licensed physician of high regard.

CANDY. The only high regard that doctor has is how high to keep Elvis.

COLONEL. Elvis is no drug addict.

CANDY. Good. You can put that to music and dance to it.

COLONEL. He just needs a little something to put him to sleep at night and a little something to wake him up in the morning.

CANDY. And a little something in between to keep him stoned.

COLONEL. You are talking about a boy who served in the armed forces.

(The intercom beeps.)

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* Colonel...

COLONEL. *(Hitting the button:)* What is it Trudy?

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* Wayne is on the phone, Colonel.

COLONEL. Wayne? About damn time. *(He grabs up the phone.)* What the hell's going on over there Wayne? You don't have to tell me you're returning my call, I know you're returning my call, I'm talking to you ain't I? I want to talk to the boy. I've tried every way I know to get in touch with him, I even wrote a letter and it came back "Return to Sender." I don't think it's funny. Now put him on the line right now and...what do you mean you can't put him on the line? *(A long pause.)* I don't believe it. Does anybody know... Alright. *(With finality:)* I understand. *(Hangs up the phone.)* He's gone. Elvis is gone. He's really gone. Nobody's seen him since day before yesterday. He's vanished.

CANDY. Maybe he just needed to be alone for a while.

COLONEL. Elvis has never been alone. He needs people like a monkey needs bananas. *(Standing up:)* I know what's going on. He's running away from me. That's what he's doin.' He's trying to get away from me.

CANDY. Oh stop it, he's probably just out Christmas shopping.

COLONEL. *(A new thought:)* What if something's happened to him?

CANDY. What could happen to him?

COLONEL. Maybe he's been kidnapped.

CANDY. *(Almost laughing:)* Kidnapped?

COLONEL. Why not?

CANDY. Oh come on...

COLONEL. He's ripe for it. The last time Elvis was in Vegas somebody sent him a note written on the back of a menu threatening to kidnap him.

CANDY. How much did they ask for?

COLONEL. Two autographed pictures and a free pass to his next concert. (*Switching on the intercom:*) Trudy...

INTERCOM. (*Trudy.*) Yes, Colonel?

COLONEL. Get on the phone and call everybody we know who might have seen Elvis in the last twenty four hours. Friends, studio musicians, drinking buddies...

INTERCOM. (*Trudy.*) Yes, Colonel.

COLONEL. Then call Joe Mauser and have him check the airport, train stations and bus terminals.

INTERCOM. (*Trudy.*) Yes, Colonel.

COLONEL. ROSCOE...

ROSCOE. (*Rushes in from stage right.*) Yes, Colonel?

COLONEL. Run down to the Toddle House...

ROSCOE. Run down to the Toddle House?

COLONEL. Don't repeat another word I say... (*ROSCOE reaches for his memo pad.*) ...and don't let me see that memo pad or I'll make you eat it.

(*ROSCOE puts the memo pad away quickly.*)

COLONEL. Run down to the Toddle House and talk to Eddie the fry cook. The boy loves his hash browns. Find out if Eddie's seen him any time since yesterday.

ROSCOE. Yes, Colonel. (*Starts to exit.*)

COLONEL. Hold it Roscoe.

ROSCOE. (*Spins around at attention.*) Yes, Colonel?

COLONEL. Don't tell anyone that Elvis is missing.

ROSCOE. (*Exploding:*) ELVIS IS MISSING ???

COLONEL. (*Grabbing him by the tie:*) Shut up you fool. If word gets out that the boy is missing we'll have Elvis sightings from Canada to Mexico. It'll be a national craze bigger than flying saucers. Tell no one. Hear?

ROSCOE. Yes sir. I hear. (*The intercom buzzes.*)

COLONEL. What is it Trudy?

INTERCOM. (*Trudy.*) I'm sorry to bother you, Colonel.

COLONEL. Then why are you bothering me?

TRUDY. Jill Tanner is here.

COLONEL. *(Switching off the intercom:)* Jill Tanner.

ROSCOE. Jill Tanner.

CANDY. Who's Jill Tanner?

COLONEL. The Mouth of Memphis.

CANDY. Who?

ROSCOE. The Mouth of Memphis.

COLONEL. Front page poison.

CANDY. What?

ROSCOE. Front page poison.

COLONEL. Scorpion in a tight skirt...

ROSCOE. *(Suddenly dreamy eyed:)* Scorpion in a tight skirt.

(Gesturing suddenly with his left hand THE COLONEL knocks ROSCOE's glasses off his face.)

COLONEL. Let me at that intercom. *(He hits the intercom button.)*

(ROSCOE is now virtually blind. He falls to his knees running his hands along the floor looking for his glasses.)

COLONEL. What a wonderful surprise...but I'm awfully busy right now. Perhaps Miss Jill could come back at a more convenient time.

(Switching off the intercom he grabs CANDY by the arm and drags him to the door stage left.)

COLONEL. That's not gonna hold her for long. Get outta' sight and keep quiet.

CANDY. Hold on a minute, what are you trying to get rid of me for?

COLONEL. Jill Tanner's a news vampire. She sucks information out of people and prints whatever she thinks will ruin them. She can write about a Sunday picnic and make it sound like a naked sex orgy.

CANDY. Well wait a minute...

COLONEL. She must know something or she wouldn't be here. Don't open your mouth till she's gone.

(THE COLONEL pushes CANDY into the room stage left and closes the door. ROSCOE has finally found his glasses and comes up behind THE COLONEL.)

COLONEL. Roscoe?

ROSCOE. Yes Colonel.

COLONEL. (*Startled:*) Jeez Louise. Get on down to The Toddle House and find out what you can from Eddie. And whatever you do don't look at Jill Tanner on your way out. She'll turn you into a block of...

(He opens the door to throw ROSCOE out and JILL TANNER strolls in. She is a woman in her thirties or forties, strong, confident and a looker. She is dressed in a snug skirt and jacket, leather boots and an open collared blouse. A fashionable "hippie bag" hangs over her shoulder.)

COLONEL. ...stone.

(ROSCOE looks over at JILL then remembering the Colonel's warning shields his eyes with one hand.)

COLONEL. That's all Roscoe.

(ROSCOE scoots out of the room, careful to hold his hand next to his eyes in order not to look at JILL. He exits stage right.)

COLONEL. Well, well you certainly bring sunshine into a room with you.

JILL. And we know what sunshine does to a snowman don't we Colonel.

COLONEL. (*Pleasantly:*) Never got a chance to congratulate you on that story you broke about Senator Grimes and that prostitution ring he ran out of his house. You certainly stirred up some muddy water.

JILL. Just doing my job, Colonel.

COLONEL. Thought all you newspaper people would be out covering that A-Bomb test in Nevada.

JILL. I don't have to travel that far to get a good story.

COLONEL. Of course you don't. A fine reporter like you could find a story in a phone booth. (*He sits.*) Well have a seat Miss Jill. (*She stares at him.*) I mean...just stand there and let me look at you. I always say there's nothing more attractive than a confident woman.

JILL. You hate confident women, Colonel. But relax. I'm not here to visit. I'm here for a story.

COLONEL. Well, I'm afraid I can't help you there. As you can see there's nothing going on around here.

JILL. (*Glancing about the room:*) So what's Elvis up to these days?

COLONEL. (*Turning to his mail once again:*) I'm a busy man, Miss Jill. You'll have to pardon me...

JILL. I thought you just said there was nothing going on around here.

COLONEL. Well, what I meant to say was...

JILL. I guess all the stuff not going on around here is keeping you pretty busy, huh.

COLONEL. That's not what I meant to say.

JILL. My Mama always told me when a man says something he doesn't mean to say then he must mean something that he doesn't want you to know.

COLONEL. (*Taking out his handkerchief:*) Smart woman, your mama. My goodness is it getting warm in here?

JILL. (*She sits on his desk and speaks seductively:*) I'm not leaving here without a story. People are tired of hearing about the Beatles breaking up and Perry Como's annual Christmas show from Hawaii. I need something to shock my readers. Something about Elvis.

COLONEL. You're sittin' on my desk.

JILL. (*She remains sitting on the desk:*) I need something dramatic and unexpected. (*She leans provocatively over the desk:*) Help me Colonel. What's Elvis doing these days?

COLONEL. (*Mopping his face with his handkerchief:*) You're sittin' on my desk.

JILL. Tell me something I don't know Colonel. Something naughty.

COLONEL. When did you talk to the boy last?

JILL. Couple of days ago.

COLONEL. (*Fiddles with some papers:*) How did he...uh...sound to you.

JILL. (*Chuckling:*) How did he sound? Well, he sounded like Elvis. When's the last time *you* talked to him?

COLONEL. I don't bother the boy unless I got business for him. I stay out of his private life.

JILL. (*Sliding off the desk:*) Well that's no fun.

COLONEL. Did he uh...say anything about...going anywhere?

JILL. (*Glancing at the photos on the wall:*) No. I thought maybe he was at home but the "boys" told me he wasn't there. Course the boys would tell me he was gathering soil samples on the Moon if it would keep me away from their precious King. I was hoping he was here. I

guess I was wrong. I'll just have to look for him somewhere else. (*She leans toward THE COLONEL.*) Now where would that be, Colonel?

COLONEL. That's between me and Elvis.

JILL. Is he gonna be home for Christmas?

COLONEL. Don't know.

JILL. Is he gonna spend Christmas in Beverly Hills?

COLONEL. Don't know.

JILL. Is he planning to go on the road again?

COLONEL. Stop peckin' at me. You're just a reporter and reporters think they're entitled to know things, things that are none of their business.

JILL. Well, did somebody miss their Wheaties this morning?

COLONEL. You know what I'm sayin'. You newspaper people expect all us ordinary people to drop everything and tell you things like you were the police or something.

JILL. (*She stands.*) What's the matter with you?

COLONEL. Nothing's the matter with me.

JILL. Is Elvis sick?

COLONEL. (*Trying to lose himself in paper work:*) Elvis is like anyone else. If he wants to take off for a few days at Christmas time that's his own business.

JILL. Who said anything about him taking off?

COLONEL. What?

JILL. Who said anything about him taking off?

COLONEL. You did.

JILL. No I didn't.

COLONEL. Well you were hinting at it.

JILL. I wasn't hinting at anything.

COLONEL. You inferred that he wasn't around.

JILL. I never inferred anything. You're the one that inferred it.

COLONEL. I don't have time for all this inferrin'. I got work to do Miss Jill.

JILL. *Has* he taken off?

COLONEL. Taken what off?

JILL. Why do I feel like I'm talking to a used car dealer... I said... *has* he taken off?

COLONEL. I didn't say anything about him taking off.

JILL. *(She stares at him for several beats.)* Where is Elvis, Colonel?

COLONEL. *(Shuffling papers:)* I don't follow him around like a sheep dog.

JILL. Where is Elvis, Colonel?

COLONEL. I don't know his every move, I've got a life of my own.

JILL. You don't know where he is, do you.

COLONEL. I can speak for myself.

JILL. Then speak.

(The door opens and TRUDY rushes in.)

TRUDY. I was able to reach everybody on my short list, Colonel.

COLONEL. Not now.

JILL. What short list?

TRUDY. But you said it was urgent.

COLONEL. Not now.

JILL. What was urgent?

COLONEL. Ix-nay in front of ill-Jay.

JILL. What the hell's going on around here?

COLONEL. Eep-kay iet-quay, udy-tray.

TRUDY. Your German is terrible, Colonel.

COLONEL. *(Standing behind JILL he gestures madly to TRUDY.)* We'll go over that list of...recording studios later, Trudy.

TRUDY. *(Finally getting it:)* Oh...ya...the recording studios...yes, Colonel. *(She turns to exit.)*

JILL. Hold it Trudy.

(TRUDY stops.)

COLONEL. Get out Trudy.

(TRUDY starts to leave.)

JILL. Hold it Trudy.

(TRUDY stops.)

JILL. Could I see that list of studios please?

COLONEL. What has gotten into you?

JILL. The seeds of a story.

COLONEL. What are you talking about?

JILL. Something's happened to Elvis.

TRUDY. *(Gasps.)*

JILL. Thank you for that gasp, Trudy.

TRUDY. "Gott im Himmel."

(TRUDY rushes out stage right. as ROSCOE rushes in.)

ROSCOE. Your hunch was right, Colonel. I went to The Donut House and sure enough...

COLONEL. ...they had eggs on the menu?

(Slipping behind JILL again, he gestures to ROSCOE to shut up and get out.)

ROSCOE. Well, sure they did. But Eddie says he saw...

COLONEL. ...lots of customers comin' in?

ROSCOE. Well, I guess. *(Taking out his note pad.)* But what I'm trying to say is that Eddie said that he was there two days ago all by himself. *(Leafing through his note pad.)*

COLONEL. Eddie was all alone by himself, what a shame. Well thanks Roscoe.

ROSCOE. Well no, not Eddie. Colonel you don't understand. I found out all about...

COLONEL. ...them waffles. Good. We'll go try some of them waffles in the mornin'.

ROSCOE. Waffles? I'm not talking about waffles, I was gonna tell you about...

COLONEL. ...and now you've told me.

ROSCOE. Told you what?

COLONEL. That's all for now, take the afternoon off.

ROSCOE. Are you all right, Colonel?

JILL. *(Taking ROSCOE by the arm and strolling towards the door stage right.)* Come on Roscoe, let's you and me go try out some of them waffles at the Toddle House. Then you can tell me all about what you've been up to today. Do they have blueberry syrup there?

(THE COLONEL *grabs* ROSCOE's other arm. He and JILL *begin a tug of war with* ROSCOE.)

COLONEL. Now, now he's a busy man, Miss Jill.

JILL. I thought you just gave him the afternoon off.

COLONEL. Let go of her, Roscoe.

ROSCOE. She's got a hold of *me*, Colonel.

JILL. All of a sudden I've got a powerful appetite.

ROSCOE. (*His eyes closed.*) I don't want to turn into stone.

COLONEL. I don't know what you think you know Miss Jill.

JILL. I don't know anything but I'm about to find out.

COLONEL. Leave him be!

(THE COLONEL *yanks* ROSCOE away from her, the two of them *clutching each other in a girlish embrace*. JILL *smiles a knowing smile and opens the door stage right*. She turns and leans in the doorway.)

JILL. I don't know who you people think you're trying to fool with this oad-lay of ap-cray but you have screwed with the wrong person... and believe me...I've been screwed by experts.

(*She turns and walks out*. THE COLONEL and ROSCOE *stand holding each other as they watch her exit*. They look at each other. ROSCOE *gives* THE COLONEL a coy grin.)

COLONEL. (*Breaking away from* ROSCOE:) Follow her. Make sure she leaves the building.

ROSCOE. Me? What'll I do if she grabs me again?

(*He throws* ROSCOE *through the door and slams it shut*. THE COLONEL *rushes over to the stage left door and rips it open*.)

COLONEL. Did you hear that?

CANDY. (*Stepping out:*) I heard that.

COLONEL. What do you think?

CANDY. What do *you* think?

COLONEL. She knows.

CANDY. She's guessing.

COLONEL. She knows.

CANDY. She's bluffing.

COLONEL. My whole life's catching up with me. Which sin am I payin' for now?

CANDY. What's going on Colonel?

COLONEL. What?

CANDY. What's really going on?

COLONEL. I don't know what you're talkin' about.

CANDY. Sure you do. What are you so upset about? Elvis has been gone for a couple of days. Big deal. Sometimes I take two days to sleep off a drunk but nobody figures I've been kidnapped.

COLONEL. Sometimes it's best to expect the worst.

CANDY. He hasn't been kidnapped and you know it. What's got you so worked up?

COLONEL. Well, it's just important that I know where he is just in case some work comes up.

CANDY. It's Christmas week. What kind of work is gonna come up for Elvis, playing Santa Claus in Macy's Department Store? Ever since I came in here you've been talking about Elvis and how you've got to see him and how you got to know where he is and how you need him. What's going on, pops?

(THE COLONEL sits down heavily in his chair and says nothing for a moment.)

COLONEL. *(Finally:)* I need to talk to somebody. Somebody I can trust.

CANDY. Hey...remember me? I'm that kid that was shop-lifting comic books at the Rexall Drug Store...until you spotted me one day and made me take them comic books back to the clerk and admit what I had done. You got me off the streets, gave me a home and my first real job. You can talk to me, pops.

COLONEL. *(Giving CANDY a long look:)* Okay Candy, here it is. I don't know if you're aware of it but I have a...well I'm a chronic...that is to say...I'm a human being and as such I'm not a perfect man. I'm subject to human weakness just like everybody else.

CANDY. What's her name Colonel?

COLONEL. No, no, no nothing like that. This is a...a moral problem.

CANDY. Should I turn my collar around for this?

COLONEL. Maybe you think this is all high comedy where I play the blusterin' old fool while you get to crack wise but don't be pokin' a stick in my cage, Candy.

CANDY. Alright, alright, alright. What's your problem?

COLONEL. I've got myself into a serious moral dilemma.

CANDY. Where did this moral dilemma take place?

COLONEL. (*Sheepishly:*) Las Vegas.

CANDY. Las Vegas? Well, that narrows it down some. There's only three things in Vegas that'll get you into a "moral dilemma". Since it's not a woman it's gotta be drinking or gambling.

COLONEL. I'm an addict, Candy. I'm a chronic gambler. I go crazy sometimes and gamble ten, twelve hours at a time. I can't help it. It's cost me a lot of money over the years, a fortune, but I can't stop. And this time...this time I got my tail in a ringer.

CANDY. A private game?

COLONEL. A casino.

CANDY. Roulette?

COLONEL. Roulette.

CANDY. What casino?

COLONEL. The Golden Horseshoe.

CANDY. How much did they clip you for?

COLONEL. It wasn't money they wanted.

CANDY. Wasn't money? What else would a casino want?

COLONEL. Fourteen hours, sweatin' over a roulette table for fourteen hours. I lost everything.

CANDY. Colonel, what did they want besides...

COLONEL. I needed credit. Just a little credit to keep me in the game.

CANDY. Why didn't you just write them an IOU?

COLONEL. I did.

CANDY. And then you kept on losing.

COLONEL. That's right.

CANDY. Then just pay the IOU and walk away.

COLONEL. I can't.

CANDY. Why, how much was the IOU?

COLONEL. I told you it wasn't for money.

CANDY. (*Out of patience:*) Well, if it wasn't for money what was it for?

COLONEL. (*Blurting it out:*) It was for Elvis.

(CANDY *stares at* THE COLONEL.)

CANDY. (*After a pause:*) What?

COLONEL. (*Quietly:*) It was for Elvis.

CANDY. What're you saying?

COLONEL. I owe them...Elvis.

CANDY. What do you mean you "owe them Elvis"?

COLONEL. The lord have mercy on my soul, I promised them Elvis. I offered up Elvis. Elvis was the IOU.

CANDY. You anted up with Elvis?

COLONEL. Well I...

CANDY. You threw Elvis into the pot?

COLONEL. Now hold on...

CANDY. You used Elvis like a poker chip?

COLONEL. Please Candy...

CANDY. Just what exactly does this IOU say?

COLONEL. It gives the casino Elvis for one night. Elvis has to perform in that casino for one night. I know it was wrong but I was desperate. (*Grabbing one of CANDY's arms*) You've got to listen to me Candy...

CANDY. Take your hands off me.

COLONEL. It's not as bad as it sounds.

CANDY. It sounds insane.

COLONEL. Gamblin' is a disease, Candy...

CANDY. Oh, stop it. This isn't a disease. This is greed. (*Tearing THE COLONEL's hands off of his coat and stepping back:*) You've pulled some crazy stunts before but this one's... You mean to tell me the casino approved of this?

COLONEL. Approved of it? It was *their* idea.

CANDY. Who runs that place?

COLONEL. Tony Roselli.

CANDY. “Bugs Roselli,” the underworld gangster?

COLONEL. Don’t call him “Bugs.” He don’t like to be called “Bugs.”

CANDY. I thought you were smarter than this Colonel. Roselli’s a dangerous man.

COLONEL. It’s the addiction Candy, I wasn’t thinkin’ clearly.

CANDY. You didn’t do this because of any addiction you did it because you like it and with Elvis in your back pocket you didn’t have to stop.

COLONEL. You’re my only friend, Candy. Are you gonna help me or not?

CANDY. How in the world can I help you? What does Elvis say about it?

COLONEL. (*Giving CANDY a baleful glance.*) Elvis don’t know about it.

CANDY. What? How can he not know about it?

COLONEL. Because I never got a chance to tell him. As soon as I got back from Vegas I tried to reach him but I couldn’t get through the Memphis Mafia. I’ve been tryin’ to reach him for days and now he’s gone.

CANDY. When is this “performance” supposed to happen?

COLONEL. Tomorrow night at The Golden Horseshoe.

CANDY. Tomorrow night? As in...tomorrow night? As in 24 hours from now? You don’t even know where Elvis is. What if he’s been kidnapped?

COLONEL. Welcome to my world.

CANDY. (*He tries to speak but stops and composes himself.*) Well, you’ll just have to tell Roselli that Elvis is sick or something and he’ll perform next week after Christmas.

COLONEL. (*Hauling out his handkerchief again.*) Are you crazy? Why don’t I just tell Roselli he looks like my sister. You don’t tell a man like Tony Roselli nothin’. He expects me to have Elvis in his casino tomorrow night. The IOU said tomorrow night and that means tomorrow night.

CANDY. Oh come on, he may be a mobster but he’s still a business man, he’ll understand.

COLONEL. Roselli don't take "no" for an answer. It's for his wife's birthday. He told me when I signed that IOU that if Elvis doesn't show I get my legs broke.

CANDY. Was he serious?

COLONEL. Serious? The man's a psychopath. He shot a barber last year for gettin' his side-burns uneven.

CANDY. Look Colonel, times have changed. I'm sure Bugs Roselli will listen to...

COLONEL. Don't call him "Bugs." He don't like to be called "Bugs."

CANDY. I'm sure Roselli will listen to reason.

COLONEL. His name ends in a vowel. I don't have to tell you what that means. (*Sitting down at his desk:*) He'll make me drink water til I drown myself.

CANDY. Colonel...

COLONEL. He'll beat me with a sock full a oranges so's the bruises don't show.

CANDY. Colonel...

COLONEL. He'll run me over with my own car and make it look like suicide.

(CANDY starts to speak then shrugs hopelessly and turns to the stage left wall and looks up at a poster of Elvis.)

CANDY. Well, you don't happen to have an extra Elvis around here do you?

COLONEL. (*Suddenly sitting up:*) Wait a minute. Wait just a minute. Candy, that's it.

CANDY. What's it?

COLONEL. Roselli's never *seen* Elvis.

CANDY. What're you talkin' about, everybody's seen Elvis.

COLONEL. I mean in person. Roselli's never seen Elvis in person... up close.

CANDY. So?

COLONEL. So if we got somebody that looked like Elvis, Roselli would never know the difference.

CANDY. What are you talkin' about?

COLONEL. I'm talkin' about an Elvis look-a-like. (*Slowly standing:*) Sure. Lots a famous people have had look-a-likes. Julius Caesar,

Napoleon, Adolf Hitler. Hell, Hitler's look-a-like was so good they killed *him* by mistake and the real Hitler got away.

CANDY. Colonel you're talkin' crazy.

COLONEL. All we need is to find the right person.

CANDY. You'll never find the right person. Nobody looks like Elvis.

COLONEL. You'd be surprised what a pair of sunglasses and a jump suit will do for a guy.

CANDY. You'll never fool Roselli.

COLONEL. I will if I get him good and liquored up.

CANDY. I don't believe this...

COLONEL. He's a Johnny Walker man. I'll make sure he gets plenty of it before the show. He won't know Elvis from Tiny Tim.

CANDY. Oh come on, Colonel, a guy like Roselli's gonna want Elvis to join him at his table, dance with his wife, say hi to his friends.

COLONEL. Details Candy, mere details.

CANDY. Now let me see if I understand this... You've got 24 hours to find somebody who will pretend to be Elvis so that he can put his life on the line by performing in front of a dangerous gangster just to pay off your gambling debt. What kind of an idiot would take on a job like that?

(The door opens and ROSCOE pokes his head in.)

ROSCOE. Did somebody call me?

(The two men stare at ROSCOE.)

COLONEL. Ask and ye shall receive.

CANDY. For the love of god Colonel don't do this.

COLONEL. Come here, boy.

(ROSCOE walks hesitantly toward THE COLONEL.)

COLONEL. Closer. *(ROSCOE steps closer.)* That's close enough.

ROSCOE. If this is about that chewing gum I stuck under the edge of your desk I promise I won't...

COLONEL. *(Eyes blazing:)* You stuck chewin' gum under my... *(Catching himself:)* ...This ain't about no chewin' gum. *(Clearing his throat he speaks tenderly:)* I need your help, Roscoe...that is...Elvis needs your help.

ROSCOE. Elvis needs my help?

COLONEL. Elvis asked for you...by name.

ROSCOE. Elvis asked for me...by name? I didn't even know he knew my name.

COLONEL. (*Kindly:*) Elvis needs you for just one night.

ROSCOE. Elvis needs me for one night?

COLONEL. (*Exploding:*) Will you stop repeating everything... (*Catching himself:*) ...you see Roscoe... (*Fatherly:*) ...Elvis wants you to pretend to be him for one night. It's a busy season and Elvis is a family man now, doin' what...family men do. That's why he needs you to... impersonate him...that is...to be his stand-in for a special...party.

ROSCOE. Holy Smokes Colonel, I've never dressed up like Elvis except on Halloween. Well...maybe a few other times but that was only on my day off and I never left the house.

COLONEL. (*Circling ROSCOE and looking him over:*) Never you mind about that, Roscoe.

ROSCOE. But I never...

COLONEL. What do you think, Candy? Sun glasses, a wig, one of them fancy jump suits? It could work.

(*CANDY turns away from them.*)

ROSCOE. But Colonel I don't think I can...

COLONEL. (*Taking off ROSCOE's glasses:*) Anybody ever tell you that you look a lot like Elvis when you're not wearing these glasses?

(*ROSCOE is practically blind without his glasses and continues talking to THE COLONEL in the same spot even after THE COLONEL has moved away to another part of the room.*)

ROSCOE. (*Not trying to sound like Elvis:*) Well...thank you very much.

COLONEL. (*Exploding:*) DID YOU HEAR THAT CANDY?

(*ROSCOE jumps.*)

CANDY. I heard Colonel.

COLONEL. Say that again, Roscoe.

ROSCOE. (*Turning in the direction of THE COLONEL's voice:*) Say what again, Colonel?

COLONEL. (*Having already moved to the other side of ROSCOE:*) "Thank you very much."

ROSCOE. (*Turning to face THE COLONEL who is already gone:*) Thank you very much?

COLONEL. (*Behind ROSCOE again:*) Sounded just like him, didn't it Candy?

CANDY. (*Without emotion:*) Dead ringer, Colonel.

ROSCOE. Well I...

COLONEL. If I had my eyes closed I'd swear Elvis was in the room with me right now.

ROSCOE. You really think I can...

COLONEL. Of course I do. Candy why don't you stick around and help us out?

CANDY. (*Heading for the door:*) I'm gettin' outa here.

COLONEL. (*Pulling CANDY down stage and speaking low:*) You can't leave me now. You know Elvis better than anyone, Candy. You know his moves and his voice. I can't do this without you...son.

(*TRUDY enters stage right.*)

ROSCOE. (*Speaking to the hat rack:*) Gosh Colonel, who's gonna feed my cat Priscilla?

TRUDY. Jill Tanner just called, Colonel.

COLONEL. What did she say?

TRUDY. She said "Eddie the fry cook is serving up some hot headlines."

COLONEL. What's that supposed to mean?

TRUDY. Your goose is cooked.

COLONEL. Trudy...

TRUDY. Your bread is toast.

COLONEL. Trudy...

TRUDY. Stick a fork in you you're done.

COLONEL. TRUDY.

TRUDY. Ya Colonel.

COLONEL. Hold all my calls. (*Pulling ROSCOE away from the hat rack.*)

TRUDY. Ya Colonel.

COLONEL. And call over to Graceland. (*His arm around ROSCOE, he leads him down stage.*)

TRUDY. Ya Colonel.

COLONEL. Have 'em send us a couple a Elvis outfits, big belts, sunglasses, wigs...the works.

TRUDY. What's going on Colonel?

COLONEL. (*Grabbing ROSCOE and holding him close:*) ELVIS IS BACK IN TOWN.

(Music up. Lights out.)

End Of Act I

ACT II

(Lights come up on the office of the Colonel. It is the next afternoon. THE COLONEL has been drilling ROSCOE mercilessly for 12 hours. THE COLONEL is fired up but ROSCOE is wearing out. He is in the process of playing air guitar in an effort to imitate Elvis. CANDY sits in the Colonel's swivel chair with his feet on the desk playing a reel to reel tape recorder of an Elvis instrumental. CANDY already has a five o'clock shadow and his clothes are wrinkled while his coat hangs on the tip of one of the longhorns on the front of the desk. He sips on a large cup of coffee. ROSCOE does a poor imitation of Elvis playing his guitar.)

COLONEL. Good, good...now slow it down, don't be in such a hurry...slouch a little bit...little bit more...lower one of them shoulders...keep that chin down...good, good...bend your left knee...keep walkin'...right foot out...keep walkin'...smile Roscoe, smile.

(ROSCOE drags himself about the room one shoulder drooping, his right foot crooked and his whole body slouching. He comes to a quivering halt mid-stage with his back to us.)

COLONEL. Now let's see that curled upper lip, Roscoe. Come on, give us that Elvis "sneer."

(ROSCOE whirls around to face us, baring his teeth in a grimace, his eyes bulging, his hands contorted.)

COLONEL. Alright, alright. kill the music. *(CANDY turns off the tape recorder.)* What's missin' Candy?

CANDY. *(Pretends to ponder the question.)* Hmm...maybe...ohh...I don't know...ELVIS.

COLONEL. *(Scowling at CANDY:)* You're doin' just fine, Roscoe.

CANDY. Listen Colonel, it's time for a break. You've been going at Roscoe on and off for nearly twelve hours.

COLONEL. We don't have time for another break. We've got a deadline. Roscoe's got it inside of him and I've got to get it out of him. *(THE COLONEL notices ROSCOE weaving:)* You don't want to let Elvis down do you, Roscoe? Elvis is countin' on you. You don't need to take another break do you?

ROSCOE. *(Punchy:)* Well maybe just a short...

COLONEL. *(Grabbing ROSCOE by the arm:)* Good boy. *(Dragging ROSCOE down center:)* Now let's get back to our voice work. You remember what we did this mornin'? *(ROSCOE flashes a thumbs up.)* Good. Let's try it again. Now just look out that way *(Indicating the*

audience:) and pretend like you're looking at the audience and say "Ladies and gentlemen...I'm Elvis Presley." You got that? Just say "Ladies and gentlemen...I'm Elvis Presley." Go.

ROSCOE. (*Clearing his throat:*) Ladies and gent...

COLONEL. Don't look at me...

ROSCOE. Ladies and...

COLONEL. Look out at the audience.

ROSCOE. (*Looking out at the audience:*) Ladies and Gentlemen...

COLONEL. Don't forget to smile...

ROSCOE. (*Trying to smile:*) Ladies and...

COLONEL. Keep your chin down...

ROSCOE. Ladies and gentlemen...

COLONEL. Chin down.

ROSCOE. Ladies and...

COLONEL. Keep your voice in the back of your throat.

ROSCOE. Ladies and gentlemen...I'm...

COLONEL. Back of the throat.

ROSCOE. Ladies and gentlemen...I'm Elvis...

COLONEL. (*Putting an arm around him:*) Back of the throat. Back of the throat.

ROSCOE. Ladies and gentlemen...I'm Elvis Presley...

COLONEL. Good, good...(Coaxing him with his fingers on ROSCOE's throat:) Like you're tryin' to gargle while you're talking. Like this: (*Gargling while he speaks:*) " I I I I'm Elvis Presley.

ROSCOE. (*Gargling:*) I I I I I...

COLONEL. That's it. Like you got somethin' in the back of your throat and you can't cough it up. I I I I I...

ROSCOE. I I I I I...

COLONEL. (*Putting his fingers on either side of ROSCOE's cheeks to purse his lips:*) Loosen them lips.

ROSCOE. I I I I'm Elvis Presley...

COLONEL. Don't forget to smile... (*His fingers mashing ROSCOE's mouth into a horrible grin.*)

ROSCOE. (*Slipping into dementia:*) Ladies and gentlemen...I I I I I'm...

(The intercom beeps.)

ROSCOE. I I I I'm Elvis Presley...

COLONEL. That's it, that's it. I I I I'm...

ROSCOE. I I I I'm...

COLONEL. Now you got it...

ROSCOE. I I I I'm...I I I I'm...

COLONEL. What is it Trudy?

ROSCOE. I I I I'm Elvis Presley...(ROSCOE's "Elvis voice" is rapidly degenerating into a deep shaky vibrato.)

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* There's a Mister Roselli, calling from Las Vegas.

ROSCOE. *(Now out of control, he screams into the intercom:)* I I I I I'm Elvis Presley...I I I I'm Elvis Pre...

COLONEL. *(Clutching ROSCOE in a headlock, he drags him with him to the phone:)* Roselli?

ROSCOE. I I I I'm Elvis Presley...I I I I I'm...

COLONEL. *(Clamping his hand over ROSCOE's mouth:)* Put him on Trudy.

INTERCOM. *(Trudy.)* Ya Colonel.

COLONEL. *(Clutching ROSCOE close while talking:)* Tony...you rascal... don't you have better things to do than keep up with me? He, he, he. *(A slight pause.)* You don't. Well, I know you didn't call just to wish me Merry Christmas. He, he, he. What's on your mind? You did? They are? Well...you're gonna have quite a crowd on your hands what with all them...families flying in from New York and Chicago and Miami. Oh it'll be a good show all right. One of a kind. What's that? It better be. He, he, he. Listen, I gotta go...I got my hands full. Bye bye now.

COLONEL. *(Hanging up the phone:)* We're runnin' out of time, Roscoe. You're gonna have to give me more, a lot more. You've got to give me everything you've got. *(ROSCOE can't speak with THE COLONEL's hand still over his mouth.)* You ready to give me everything you got ?

(THE COLONEL releases his grip and uncovers ROSCOE's mouth.)

ROSCOE. I I I I I'm Elvis Presley...I I I I I'm Elvis Presley...

COLONEL. *(Covering ROSCOE's mouth again:)* Save it for later. Don't use it up. Now let's work on them Elvis moves again.

(His arm still around ROSCOE's shoulder, THE COLONEL leads him down center.)

COLONEL. One thing about Elvis is that he's always moving. Even when he's standing still he's moving. He's moving some part of his body all the time.

ROSCOE. Yes, Colonel.

COLONEL. *(He lets go of ROSCOE and nervously paces back and forth.)* Remember Roscoe, Elvis prowls the stage. Like a panther. Go ahead. Let's see you prowl, Roscoe.

ROSCOE. Yes sir, Colonel. *(He gives THE COLONEL a thumbs up.)*

COLONEL. Okay, Candy. Hit it.

(CANDY presses a button on the tape recorder on the desk and we hear an instrumental version of one of Elvis' hit records. As the music plays THE COLONEL coaches ROSCOE on his movements.)

COLONEL. Go on, prowl Roscoe...prowl.

(ROSCOE tries to prowl about the stage. It is a mincing, embarrassing series of little steps and awkward posturing. He moves past THE COLONEL and goes around the desk.)

COLONEL. Prowl Roscoe. Prowl... *(ROSCOE panics and begins to run and hop.)* ...prowl...PROWL...!!!

(ROSCOE quickens his effeminate movements and circles around the desk again. In a panic to please the Colonel, ROSCOE starts running and leaping, his arms flaying his knees in the air.)

COLONEL. Prowl Roscoe...Prowl...STOP, STOP. STOP. That's not prowlin' Roscoe that's some kinda' Nancy-boy-tip-toein. Here... *(THE COLONEL picks up a stapler from the desk and hands it to ROSCOE.)* Pretend this stapler is a microphone.

(ROSCOE takes the stapler, unsure what to do with it. Raising the front end of it to his mouth we here a loud click. ROSCOE winces and grabs his lower lip having stapled himself.)

COLONEL. Hold that stapler like a six gun. *(ROSCOE holds the stapler away from his body with two fingers.)*

(CANDY sits in the chair watching with a look of weary disbelief as ROSCOE tries to pretend the stapler is a microphone.)

COLONEL. Remember to carry the cord to the microphone like a lasso. The stage is your prairie. You got that? The stage is your prairie.

ROSCOE. (*Suddenly inspired:*) The stage is my prairie. The stage is my prairie.

(ROSCOE tries to prowl the stage with his six gun and lasso repeating the line "The stage is my prairie.")

COLONEL. (*Grabbing the stapler from ROSCOE:*) Give me that damn thing. You hold the microphone like this. Then you twirl the microphone cord like this. Then you bend down and shake it.

(He and THE COLONEL stand side by side pantomiming the twirling of a lasso while they bend and shake their knees. TRUDY enters with a tray of sandwiches and stops dead in her tracks when she sees THE COLONEL gyrating. Even ROSCOE stops and stares at him as he shimmyes and shakes. THE COLONEL loses himself, shaking his hips and grinding to the music.)

COLONEL. Don't be afraid to swing them hips, Roscoe. Grind it out. You see what I'm doin'? Bump it out. SHAKE IT OUT BABY.

(CANDY turns off the music. THE COLONEL continues his mad gyrations seemingly unaware that the music has stopped.)

COLONEL. SHAKE IT OUT BABY...SHAKE IT...SHAKE...shake it...baby...shake...it.

(THE COLONEL comes to an embarrassing stop. He realizes that CANDY, TRUDY, and ROSCOE are staring at him.)

COLONEL. (*Out of breath he takes out his handkerchief.*) Well...you...uh...you get the picture, Roscoe?

ROSCOE. Oh yes sir...I get the picture.

CANDY. I think we *all* get the picture, Colonel.

TRUDY. And it will haunt us for the rest of our lives.

COLONEL. (*Putting the stapler back on the desk:*) Alright, alright, what're you all doin' standin' around? Everybody take five. Go on Roscoe, get outta here, go grab yourself a soda and then get on back in here and try on them jump suits we got in the back room.

TRUDY. Take one of these sandwiches Roscoe, I know you must be starved.

(ROSCOE grabs two sandwiches and exits stage right as TRUDY sets the tray on the desk and exits stage right, closing the door behind her. THE COLONEL gives CANDY a long look.)

COLONEL. (*Finally:*) Well...what do you think?

CANDY. I think you make one hell of an Elvis, Colonel.

COLONEL. (*Exploding:*) Never mind about me. I'm talkin' about Roscoe. What do you think?

CANDY. What do *you* think?

COLONEL. It's hard to say.

CANDY. It's not hard to say. He stinks.

COLONEL. It could be worse.

CANDY. It could only be worse if he didn't speak English.

COLONEL. We just need more time.

CANDY. We don't need more time we need more talent. Every time he gives you that "thumbs up" you can bet he's drawin' a blank.

COLONEL. It's *there*, if we could just bring it out of him.

CANDY. (*Wearily he takes his sports coat off the longhorns.*) Oh what's the use. Why don't we just throw in the towel? It was a crazy idea anyway.

COLONEL. What do you mean, "throw in the towel"? What do you think that phone call was all about? You think that was Avon calling? That was Roselli. That was his way of sending me a message.

CANDY. He's not Al Capone. He's just Bugs Roselli...

COLONEL. Don't call him "Bugs."

TOGETHER. He don't like to be called "Bugs."

CANDY. (*Putting on his coat:*) Yea I know. Listen Colonel...I'd do anything I could to help you but you're fighting a losing battle. I think it's time to let it go. (*He opens the door to leave.*) Tell Roselli the truth. Sometimes the truth works, Colonel.

COLONEL. I'm not beat yet. I can handle Roselli. Hell, if I can make Roscoe believe he's a dog then I can make... (*He stops short...inspired.*) ...I can make him believe...anything.

CANDY. (*Closing the door slowly:*) What...?

COLONEL. I can do it. There's nothin' to it...back in my Carnival days I used to hypnotize people for fifty cents a pop. I could put anybody under. Make 'em believe they was anyone.

(THE COLONEL *steps downstage with his back to CANDY thinking it over.*)

CANDY. (*Coming back into the room:*) Making somebody believe they're a dog is a long way from making somebody believe they're Elvis.

COLONEL. You want to bet? I've got the gift, Candy. I've always had second sight. (*Staring off into space:*) All I gotta do is make a man feel relaxed and at ease and then talk to him real soft and steady. People always said my voice was just the right tone to put folks under. Course it helps to say stuff like... "Your eyes are gettin' sleepy. You need to sleep...sleep." That kinda' stuff. Hell I don't have to say nothin' if I don't want to. I can put somebody out with the movements of my hand. (*He lifts his right hand and moves it about seductively like a snake.*) See that...just move my hand about like this and pretty soon my hand is like a cobra puttin' its next victim into a trance just before it strikes.

(*CANDY has been watching THE COLONEL's hand-snake and his eyelids begin to flutter.*)

CANDY. Sounds kinda'...crazy...to me.

(*ROSCOE enters stage right while taking a bite from his sandwich.*)

COLONEL. Usually I say somethin' like... "Listen to my voice...

(*ROSCOE immediately drops the sandwich from his hand and is instantly under the Colonel's spell. His mouth hangs open and the bite of sandwich is visible in his open mouth. His eyes close as THE COLONEL continues talking.*)

COLONEL. My voice is like somethin' in the bottom of a deep well...listen to my words...you can hardly keep your eyelids open...they're soooo heavy...if only you could sleep...yes...sleep..."

(*ROSCOE's head tilts back and his body sways with the words spoken by THE COLONEL. CANDY is also under the power of the Colonel's words as his head slumps, his eyes close. THE COLONEL is downstage center and doesn't notice either of them.*)

COLONEL. (*Off handedly:*) And that's it. Nothin' to it. All that's left is to make a suggestion and the deal is done. Course I'd need a command word. A command word is a word that turns 'em on or off. It could be any word. "Boy" for instance. Boy's a good word. I could say something like... "When you hear the word "boy" you will become Elvis. You will sing like Elvis, talk like Elvis...you will be Elvis." Then I bring him out of it. "You will awaken now and remember nothing until you hear the command word." (*He claps his hands three times.*) And that's all there is to it. It's simple.

(*ROSCOE and CANDY instantly awaken and are back to normal.*)

CANDY. You're not really going to try... (*Surprised to see ROSCOE standing nearby.*) ...to try hypnosis are you, Colonel?

(ROSCOE sees his sandwich on the floor, picks it up, takes a hair off of it, smells it and resumes eating it.)

COLONEL. No, I guess not, Candy. It was just a thought. Besides... not everybody can be hypnotized.

ROSCOE. *(Stepping forward while munching on the sandwich:)* Sorry to bother you Colonel, but I'm ready to try on those Elvis outfits.

(CANDY pours himself some more coffee and turns to look upstage at the wall of Elvis photos.)

COLONEL. They're in the back room, Roscoe. Try one on. *(ROSCOE heads for the door stage left.)* I'm gonna go splash some water in my face. We've got a hell of a lot of work to do.

(ROSCOE enters the room stage left and closes the door behind him.)

COLONEL. *(Walking past CANDY he pauses.)* Boy...am I beat. *(He continues off stage right.)*

(THE COLONEL exits, closing the door. CANDY stands with his back to us looking up at a picture of Elvis on the wall. After a few beats he sets his coffee cup down on the desk. What follows is a Jekyll-Hyde transformation from CANDY to Elvis. With his back still turned to us he begins to writhe and convulse.

One of his legs begins to shake. We watch the back of his head as it slowly rises up from hunched shoulders. His back shifts as he looks slowly from side to side. He turns the collar up on his coat. Suddenly he whirls around to face the audience. His whole manner and gestures have changed.

We can actually hear him muttering in an Elvis sounding voice as if he's about to break into a song. His eyes have a sleepy quality, his right leg shakes, the left side of his upper lip quivers as it shapes itself into the famous sneer. He walks in a sexy manner down stage toward the audience and stops, swaying back and forth and sneering with his eyes nearly shut.)

ELVIS/CANDY. Ahhhh... Good evening ladies and gentlemen...I I I I I'm Elvis Presley.

(ROSCOE comes out of the room stage left wearing an Elvis jumpsuit, big belt, scarf, black wig and wearing a pair of high heeled boots. He crosses down in front of ELVIS/CANDY who watches him.)

ROSCOE. How do these shoes look, Colonel? They're a little big. Say, where's the colonel? *(ELVIS/CANDY continues to watch ROSCOE with mild curiosity.)* Oh, he stepped out. Well good. I need a break.

I'm so tired. You know something Candy, just between you and me I think this whole idea is crazy. The Colonel thinks that I can take Elvis' place for this job in Vegas but nobody can take Elvis' place. I mean there's only one Elvis. You know that.

ELVIS/CANDY. Uhhhhh...Thank you very much.

ROSCOE. (*Grinning he turns to look at CANDY:*) Say, that was pretty good Candy.

ELVIS/CANDY. Ahhhh I don't know anything about no candy, little buddy, but ahhhh what's all this about the Commodore wantin' you to pretend to be me.

ROSCOE. That voice is really good. Could you show me how to do that?

ELVIS/CANDY. (*Stepping down stage:*) I I I I I don't know why the Colonel would want anybody to pretend to be me when he's got me right here and I could be me.

ROSCOE. Hey, maybe you should take my place.

ELVIS/CANDY. How come you're wearin' my clothes?

ROSCOE. (*Chuckling nervously:*) Hey, come on Candy cut it out.

ELVIS/CANDY. What's the Colonel up to, little buddy? How come he wants you to be me?

ROSCOE. Stop it will you. What's the matter with you?

(*TRUDY enters stage right.*)

TRUDY. Oh there you are, Roscoe. Say...you look pretty good in that costume. Have you seen the Colonel?

(*ELVIS/CANDY strolls about the room looking at the pictures on the wall.*)

ROSCOE. (*Hurrying over to TRUDY he whispers:*) Am I glad to see you Miss Trudy. Something's wrong with Candy.

TRUDY. What's wrong with him?

ROSCOE. He thinks he's Elvis.

TRUDY. (*Raising her voice:*) Elvis?

ELVIS/CANDY. (*Turning around to the sound of his name:*) Somebody call me?

ROSCOE. See what I mean.

TRUDY. Candy?

ELVIS/CANDY. Ahhh that's what my little buddy here keeps callin' me. I I I I'm Elvis.

TRUDY. What's with this "Elvis stuff"?

ELVIS/CANDY. I I I I like the way you talk.

TRUDY. Alright Candy...very cute.

ELVIS/CANDY. You sure are a sexy little frauline.

TRUDY. (*She looks at ROSCOE.*) What did he just call me?

ROSCOE. Sounded like he called you a sexy little frauline.

TRUDY. He's never called me that before.

ROSCOE. He's been calling me "Little Buddy".

ELVIS/CANDY. (*Gesturing to ROSCOE:*) Ahhh why's this guy wearin' my clothes? (*Looking at his own clothing:*) Ahhh how come I'm wearin' this outfit? Oh my god. I I I I look like Robert Goulet.

TRUDY. Alright Candy you've had your little joke.

ELVIS/CANDY. I I I I gotta go home and get out of these clothes. Is this here a back door?

(ELVIS/CANDY spots the room stage left. He rushes in, pausing in the door way to bump and grind for TRUDY before disappearing into the back room and slamming the door behind him.)

TRUDY. Candy stop this, I don't have time for such foolishness. (*Suddenly it dawns on her.*) Wait a minute. I know what's going on. He's done it again.

ROSCOE. Who's done it again Miss Trudy?

TRUDY. That elephant in the string tie.

ROSCOE. Elephant in the string tie?

(THE COLONEL enters stage right wiping his hands off with a towel.)

COLONEL. What elephant in the string tie?

TRUDY. Boy...you've got some nerve.

(ROSCOE is standing upstage behind the Colonel's swivel chair when he hears the command word "boy." He immediately faints behind the chair out of sight. As THE COLONEL and TRUDY keep talking we see ROSCOE emerge from behind the chair going through his Jekyll-Hyde transformation into Elvis.)

TRUDY. (*Walking down stage to THE COLONEL:*) How could you do such a thing?

COLONEL. What're you talking about?

TRUDY. You know perfectly well what I'm talking about.

COLONEL. What?

TRUDY. What you did to Candy?

COLONEL. What did I do to Candy?

TRUDY. You've got him walking around the office sneering at me.

COLONEL. Sneering at you?

TRUDY. Saying silly things and acting like Elvis.

(ROSCOE is still upstage, hunched over and wheeling about in the throes of his Elvis transformation unnoticed by THE COLONEL and TRUDY.)

COLONEL. Acting like Elvis? Why would he be acting like Elvis?

TRUDY. Don't play innocent with me. You hypnotized him.

COLONEL. What's she talkin' about, Roscoe?

ELVIS/ROSCOE. *(Whirling around, now fully transformed:)* I I I don't know about no Roscoe but she sure is a sexy little frauline.

TRUDY. Roscoe!

(ELVIS/ROSCOE steps down stage and stands stage right of THE COLONEL and TRUDY.)

COLONEL. What do you mean callin' her a sexy little frauline?

(ELVIS/CANDY explodes out of the room stage left now wearing an Elvis costume and wig like Roscoe's. He does a karate kick out at the audience then stands chewing gum and admiring his own jump suit. Both Elvises proceed to move about the room gesturing like Elvis and striking poses from his famous stage shows.)

ELVIS/CANDY. This is more like it. What's up Commodore?

COLONEL. *(Turning to ELVIS/CANDY:)* What did you call me?

ELVIS/ROSCOE. What's up Commodore?

COLONEL. *(Turning to ELVIS/ROSCOE:)* What did you call me?

(THE COLONEL and TRUDY are trapped between the two Elvises.)

TRUDY. Now they're both doing it.

COLONEL. What the hell's going on? *(To CANDY:)* How come you're dressed like that?

ELVIS/CANDY. Ahhhh you tell me, Commodore.

COLONEL. Stop callin' me that.

ELVIS/ROSCOE. What's up Commodore.

TRUDY. Make them stop, Colonel.

COLONEL. Cut it out you two, you're scaring Trudy.

ELVIS/ROSCOE. I I I I'm Elvis Presley.

ELVIS/CANDY. I I I I'm Elvis Presley.

COLONEL. Stop talkin' like that.

TRUDY. It's like the Invasion of the Body Snatchers.

ELVIS/ROSCOE. I I I I'll talk any way you want, Colonel.

TRUDY. Then this isn't a joke?

COLONEL. Well it's not my joke, they were fine when I went to wash my hands.

TRUDY. Why are they both acting like Elvis?

COLONEL. (*It hits him.*) Oh my lord. It can't be. Great Caesar's Ghost. I'm better than I thought I was. I must've got 'em both at the same time.

TRUDY. What are you talking about?

COLONEL. What a show this would make. Bigger than the bearded baby or the five legged cat. (*Taking TRUDY aside:*) No time to explain Trudy, but somehow I must have hypnotized them both at the same time. I hypnotized them into thinking that they're Elvis.

TRUDY. Why did you hypnotize them?

COLONEL. I didn't do it on purpose.

TRUDY. How do you hypnotize somebody by accident?

COLONEL. Never mind. We've gotta get 'em back to normal.

TRUDY. Well snap your fingers or clap your hands and end all of this nonsense.

COLONEL. Snap your fingers...this ain't no T.V. show. This is real life. I can't bring them out of it without the command word.

TRUDY. The command word?

COLONEL. The command word.

(The two Elvises kneel before the audience with outstretched arms.)

TRUDY. Well say the command word then.

COLONEL. Alright, alright. *(He points his extended fingers at the Elvises.)* Listen to me very carefully. I'm going to say one word and when you hear that word you will no longer be Elvis...you will be your normal selves again. *(Biting his lower lip.)* Just as soon as...I say...that word.

TRUDY. *(After a long pause.)* Well go on...say it...what are you waiting for?

COLONEL. *(His fingers still pointing, he closes his eyes.)* Give me a second.

TRUDY. For god's sake Colonel say the word.

COLONEL. I can't.

TRUDY. Why not?

COLONEL. I've forgotten the command word.

TRUDY. What?

(The two Elvises continue to make Elvis sounds and karate moves.)

COLONEL. I can't remember the command word.

TRUDY. Why would you choose a command word you couldn't remember?

COLONEL. It was just a word I thought of off the top of my head.

TRUDY. Did you write it down?

COLONEL. *(Exploding:)* Why would I write it down when I didn't even know I was gonna use it?

TRUDY. You've got to bring them out of this.

COLONEL. I can't without knowin' the command word.

TRUDY. You mean they will be like this forever?

COLONEL. Just stop talkin' and let me think. *(Taking out his handkerchief:)* Boy...do I need a drink.

CANDY. *(Back to normal:)* I'll have one too, Colonel. Scotch neat.

ROSCOE. *(Back to normal:)* Coca-Cola for me.

(TRUDY and THE COLONEL look at each other.)

TRUDY. That sounded normal.

COLONEL. Yea, it did sound normal. *(Cautiously:)* Candy? Is that you?

CANDY. What do you mean? What kinda' question is that?

COLONEL. *(To TRUDY:)* Sounds alright to me. *(To ROSCOE:)* Roscoe...you all right Roscoe?

ROSCOE. Sure I'm all right. Why wouldn't I be?

CANDY. How come you two are staring at us?

COLONEL / TRUDY. We're not staring at you.

(THE COLONEL and TRUDY stare at CANDY and ROSCOE.)

COLONEL. *(To TRUDY:)* I must've said the command word without knowing it.

(The phone rings in the outer office.)

TRUDY. I better get that. *(She rushes out of the office.)* Thank god they're normal again.

CANDY. What did she mean...“normal”?

COLONEL. *(Chuckling:)* Well, to tell you the truth Candy, you and Roscoe haven't been yourselves for a while.

CANDY. *(Grinning:)* Not ourselves?

ROSCOE. *(Grinning:)* Why wouldn't we be ourselves, Colonel?

COLONEL. *(Chuckling:)* Well you better get ready for this one fellas because you're not going to believe what just happened.

CANDY. *(Chuckling:)* Okay...what just happened?

ROSCOE. *(Laughing:)* Yea...what happened?

COLONEL. *(Laughing:)* Boy...have I got a story for you two.

ELVIS/CANDY. *(He quivers and shakes violently as he becomes Elvis again:)* Ahhh what kind'a story have you got for me Colonel.

COLONEL. What? *(Backing away in horror.)*

ELVIS/ROSCOE. *(His legs suddenly shaking, his hips grinding:)* I I I I got a story for you too, Commodore. *(With swiveling hips he moves towards THE COLONEL.)*

COLONEL. *(Terrified:)* Oh no.

ELVIS/CANDY. *(A pinched scream:)* OW!!! Dance with me Colonel.

COLONEL. No...NO!!!!

ELVIS/ROSCOE. *(A pinched scream:)* OW!!! Dance with me Colonel.

(Both Elvies dance around THE COLONEL. ELVIS/CANDY grabs THE COLONEL and jitter-bugs with him as TRUDY enters.)

TRUDY. What's going on in here?

(ELVIS/ROSCOE grabs TRUDY. She screams. The two of them jitter bug for a bit.)

TRUDY. *(Finally breaking away from ELVIS/ROSCOE:)* What happened?

COLONEL. *(Breaking away from ELVIS/CANDY:)* They're back.

TRUDY. *(She screams:)* Aaughhhh !

COLONEL. Stop that screamin'.

TRUDY. What happened to the command word?

COLONEL. I said the command word.

TRUDY. Then say it again.

COLONEL. I don't know which one of the words I just said was the command word.

TRUDY. All you have to do is remember what you just said to them.

COLONEL. My god woman, don't you think I know that.

TRUDY. What're we going to do?

(The two Elvises circle about TRUDY and THE COLONEL, mumbling and wriggling.)

ELVIS/ROSCOE. Thank you very much.

ELVIS/CANDY. Thank you very much.

COLONEL. *(Taking TRUDY away and downstage:)* Trudy, listen to me. You've got to concentrate.

TRUDY. Why do I have to concentrate?

COLONEL. I need for you to help me remember what the hell I've been sayin'.

TRUDY. Remember what *you've* been saying?

COLONEL. *(Grabbing her by the arms:)* Concentrate, Trudy. Think. Think. I need for you to help me remember what I said a few minutes ago because one of them words is the command word. What exactly have I been saying to Candy and Roscoe for the last five minutes?

TRUDY. Alright, alright...let me think...uhh...well...you said something like...listen to me or I want you to listen to me or...now listen...that was it... "Now listen, Elvis..." And then you said "Let me talk to you for a minute."

COLONEL. Good, good...what else.

TRUDY. And then you said...you said... "I have to explain something."

COLONEL. (*Handing TRUDY a pad and pencil:*) Here, write it down so's I can read it back to them.

TRUDY. (*Scribbling on the pad:*) Okay... "Now listen, Elvis." "Now listen, let me talk to you for a minute."

COLONEL. Now we're gettin' somewhere.

TRUDY. Then you said "I have to explain something."

COLONEL. Good, good...

TRUDY. And then...and then...can't *you* remember anything you said?

COLONEL. I been on my feet for 26 hours, it's a miracle I can remember my own name. I'm all shook up! (*Pause.*) Go on, what else?

TRUDY. Wait a minute...I remember...you said you wanted to drink something.

COLONEL. I did?

TRUDY. (*Scribbling and pausing occasionally to think:*) Yes...you said... you said...oh yes...I remember...you said "I need something to drink."

COLONEL. What else?

TRUDY. (*More scribbling:*) And then we thought they were normal again and you said something like "I think they're normal" and then I left the room to answer the phone.

COLONEL. Okay, okay give me that pad, let me try it out on them.

(THE COLONEL cautiously approaches ELVIS/CANDY and ELVIS/ROSCOE who stand staring at him.)

COLONEL. Candy...uh...Elvis...I got somethin' to say to you and I want you to listen real carefully to what I have to say. Every word. Understand?

ELVIS/CANDY. I I I I understand Colonel. I'll do just like you say.

ELVIS/ROSCOE. I I I I'll listen real careful to every word you say.

COLONEL. (*Reading from the pad:*) "Now listen...Elvis...let me talk to you...for a minute...I have to explain something...I need a drink.

(ELVIS/CANDY and ELVIS/ROSCOE stare back at THE COLONEL without moving.)

TRUDY. They don't look any different.

COLONEL. They haven't changed a bit. We must've left a word out.

TRUDY. *(Taking the memo pad from THE COLONEL and reading aloud:)* "Now listen...Elvis...let me talk to you...for a minute...I have to explain something...I need a drink." What could we have left out?

COLONEL. Boy...now I *do* need a drink.

CANDY. *(Normal again:)* We've got work to do, Colonel. No time for drinkin'.

ROSCOE. *(Normal again:)* I've got to try on another costume, Colonel.

(TRUDY and THE COLONEL look at each other.)

TRUDY. What did you just say?

COLONEL. *(Exploding:)* BOY...boy...of course...BOY. Boy was the word. How could I forget boy...It was boy...BOY!!!

(Without realizing it THE COLONEL is switching CANDY and ROSCOE on and off. Each time he says the word "boy" the two Elvises convulse and freeze in a different pose and posture. TRUDY sees this but THE COLONEL is too stunned by his realization to notice them. By the time the last "boy" has been said the two Elvises collapse to the floor.)

TRUDY. *(Jumping on THE COLONEL's back in an effort to stop him:)* Stop Colonel, STOP. Don't say that word again. They're going to shake themselves to death.

COLONEL. Good lord. You're right Trudy. You're right. *(TRUDY hops off his back.)* I didn't know what I was doing. Now that I know the command word...I can bring them out of the trance completely.

ELVIS/ROSCOE. *(Getting up off the floor:)* I I I I I feel like I just ate a marijuana brownie.

ELVIS/CANDY. *(Getting up off the floor:)* I I I I I feel like I *am* a marijuana brownie.

COLONEL. *(Stepping forward:)* Elvis...Elvis listen here you two. Listen to the sound of my voice. You hear only my voice. It's like a voice comin' to you from the bottom of a deep well. *(The two Elvises stare at THE COLONEL with wide eyes.)* Now I'm gonna say the command word one last time and then when I clap my hands you will no longer be... *(Stops himself as he spins around to face the audience.)* Wait a minute. Wait just a minute. Why should I change 'em back? This is just what we've been waitin' for.

TRUDY. What do you mean?

COLONEL. (*Taking TRUDY aside and down stage yet again.*) We've got our Elvis, right here.

TRUDY. You mean...

COLONEL. Sure...look at 'em. They move like Elvis, they talk like Elvis. We've got Instant Elvis. We can take 'em both to Vegas.

TRUDY. Is that legal?

(They both stand down stage with their backs to the Elvises who stand up stage frozen with eyes wide open.)

COLONEL. What're you talkin' about "Is it legal." This is no time to be legal. I've got 'em where I want 'em. They'll do anything I tell 'em to.

TRUDY. Are you sure?

COLONEL. Of course I'm sure. If I say... (*Raising his voice*) ..."Elvis go on outside and play in the street..." that's what they'll do. I'm in complete control. Don't you see?

(ELVIS/CANDY and ELVIS/ROSCOE dutifully turn in unison and walk through the stage right door and exit.)

TRUDY. But there's two of them.

COLONEL. So much the better. We can keep one of 'em as a spare.

TRUDY. You can't treat them like disposable diapers. You're holding them against their will. It's inhuman.

COLONEL. I didn't do this to 'em on purpose. It was an accident. No...it was fate. Providence stepped in and delivered me twin Elvises. (*Looks at his watch.*) We've got just enough time to pull this thing off. I think I see light at the end of the tunnel.

TRUDY. (*Looking over THE COLONEL's shoulder.*) I don't think I see anything at the end of the tunnel.

COLONEL. What're you talkin' about?

TRUDY. They're gone.

COLONEL. Who's gone?

TRUDY. The twins.

COLONEL. What do you mean the twins... (*THE COLONEL turns to look.*) WHERE ARE THEY?

TRUDY. You must have sent them away.

COLONEL. WHY WOULD I SEND THEM AWAY? Quick, check the bathroom and the hall. HURRY.

TRUDY. Ya Colonel.

(THE COLONEL goes to the door stage left and opens it.)

COLONEL. Candy, Roscoe...I mean...Elvis? Are you in there, son? (To himself:) Don't tell me they wandered outside. Great Balls of Fire... (He runs for the door stage right and nearly collides with TRUDY.)

TRUDY. (Entering stage right:) They're not in the bathroom or the hallway. I didn't see them anywhere.

COLONEL. They're gone!! Great Jingle Bells, they've gotten away.

TRUDY. Take it easy Colonel.

COLONEL. What do you mean "take it easy"? You want 'em singin' to the lamp posts and shakin' their hips at every policeman on the street? The cops'll throw 'em in the drunk tank. Go look out front.

TRUDY. Ya Colonel. (She turns to leave and nearly collides with ELVIS/ROSCOE who enters stage right.)

COLONEL. There you are.

TRUDY. You shouldn't run off like that, we were worried.

ELVIS/ROSCOE. I I I I just went out to play in the traffic like you told me Colonel.

COLONEL. Where's the other one. (Grabbing ELVIS/ROSCOE by the lapels:) Roscoe...where's Elvis?

ELVIS/ROSCOE. I I I I I'm right here Colonel.

COLONEL. I mean the other Elvis. Where's the other Elvis.

ELVIS/ROSCOE. Ahhh there's only one Elvis, Commodore. That's me.

COLONEL. (Shaking him by the lapels:) Stop callin' me Commodore. Where's that...fella that was with you?

ELVIS/ROSCOE. Oh him...ahhh he took off...said he was goin' home.

COLONEL. Goin home?

ELVIS/ROSCOE. Said he wanted to sleep in his own bed tonight.

COLONEL. My god Agnes. He's headed for Graceland.

TRUDY. You've let an Elvis loose on the city.

COLONEL. We can only hope that he gets run over by a car.

TRUDY. COLONEL !!!

**THIS PLAY IS
NOT OVER!**

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